



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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WATERFOWL "DUCKS" BEHIND IRON CURTAIN: SOME OF THEM STAY THERE

Without so much as a "by your leave", American migratory waterfowl have been "ducking" behind the Iron Curtain--and some of them have stayed there, Department of the Interior bird banding records indicate.

Since November 1954, the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, has received five communications from the USSR Academy of Sciences (Bird Ringing Bureau) reporting on 76 American-banded birds killed in USSR territory. A recent communication contained the band report of 35 such birds.

These reports indicate that some species of ducks and geese banded in Alaska, Canada and some of the western States, particularly in California, migrate westward to Russian lands. The bulk of the bands recovered in the USSR have been taken from pintails and snow geese, although a black brant banded in California on March 12, 1953 was killed July 25, 1956, on Novaya Sibir Island in the Arctic Ocean about 1,000 miles west of Kamchatka Peninsula.

There have not been enough returns, Bureau officials say, to point to any pattern of western or northwestern migration. The USSR is also banding migratory waterfowl. No Russian-banded birds have been reported in the United States, although some have been reported in Canada and Greenland. Officials say this might indicate that Russian banding operations are not carried out in the area where American-banded birds have been taken.

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